

JPRS: 3139

1 April 1960

MAIN FILE

DEATH COMES BY MAIL

- GERMANY -

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FOREWORD

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DEATH COMES BY MAIL

[Following is a translation of an unsigned article in Der Spiegel (The Mirror), No 11, 12; 9 and 16 March 1960, Hamburg, pages 34-48; 39-49.]

A Report on the French 'Red Hand'

Europe has become a secondary battlefield of the war in Algeria: the registered bag of the French terrorists numbers 14 attempted murders and 12 dead in the underground war against the Algerian FLN rebels who are seeking weapons and allies for their uprising in Europe. A majority of the attacks occurred in the [German] Federal Republic. After two attacks with explosives on the Hamburg hunting-weapon handler, Schluter, had caused two deaths; after the FLN delegate Ait Ahcene was shot down in front of the Tunisian Embassy near Bonn; and after the principal buyer for the Algerian rebels, Georg Puchert, repeatedly warned by the French colonel of intelligence Marcel Mercier, was blown up with his car in Frankfurt; the SPIEGEL named the originator of the series of murders in March 1959 for the first time: the secret French organization, 'Red Hand.'

First Installment

Three weeks after the SPIEGEL disclosures the Frankfurt Chief State Prosecutor, Heinz Wolf, assigned to investigate the Puchert case, took over the SPIEGEL terminology and wrote it into history at a press conference on 16 April 1959.

Heinz Wolf is an American type of "district attorney" who himself participates in criminal investigations and keeps the public informed through press conferences. He did so in the case of the girl Rosemarie Nitribitt; he is doing so with the "Red Hand."

Since Wolf is an official of the SPD government of Hesse and also the friend of the CDU Foreign Minister Heinrich von Brentano who comes from Hesse, he did not have to be so concerned about Bonn's courting of French favor as did, for example, the Bonn security group of the Federal Criminal Office in its investigation of the shooting of Ait Ahcene.

Therefore the Frankfurt prosecutor stated candidly that the "Red Hand" is probably working with, or even on assignment from, French military intelligence -- as SPIEGEL had reported.

Wolf also issued warrants for three Frenchmen mentioned by SPIEGEL in connection with the Puchert murder: Scarface Pedro, Killer Viari, and Milkface Durieux.

While the charges of Wolf sounded dreadful, they were confirmed half a year later in Paris by one of the suspects and publicly substantiated by details on the well-oiled murder machine, "Red Hand."

Early in November last year the Paris correspondent of the London "Daily Mail," Michael Jacobson, was offered for a slight fee an interview with Christian Durieux.

Jacobson did not at that time give much credence to the rumors about "Red Hand" but decided, in accordance with journalistic custom, at least to give the man a hearing. They met on the evening of 3 November 1959 in a bar near the office of the "Daily Mail" which, with the representatives of Reuters and other British papers, lies in a side street off Grands Boulevard.

As Jacobson was a frequent visitor in this bar and feared that they would be interrupted too often, he suggested going to his office; his guest was agreeable.

Jacobson began the interview skeptically. His attitude changed in an hour or two. The man across from him, who never involved himself in contradictions and always answered the most peculiar of questions with certainty and speed, was a member of a well-organized secret federation.

About himself Durieux explained to the correspondent only vaguely that he had been born in Oran and that he had four or five Paris addresses. With some hesitation he said that he was a civil servant by profession.

But what Christian Durieux told Jacobson about the activities of the "Red Hand" sounded so sensational that it made a 3,000-word story.

Two days later Durieux came again to the office to sign the interview he had given. This time he came accompanied by a man who was evidently his bodyguard. The gunman kept his hat and green leather coat on, and seated himself in a corner without opening his mouth. His description coincided with that of the Puchert-enemy, Pedro: the scarred face of a boxer, stocky build, perhaps 50 years old.

Durieux, who had identified himself at the first meeting with his identity papers, skipped over the English manuscript, demanded two or three small changes, and prepared to sign. Next he placed his name in block letters under the manuscript, but then crossed it out again.

At the end of November the interview appeared in the "Daily Mail." Its content, greatly abridged, was as follows:

"I, Christian Durieux, am an active member of the 'Red Hand,' a secret organization founded in North Africa to pay back the terrorists in their own coin....

"The 'Red Hand' is neither a comic opera nor racist. It arose from the existing terror. Its symbol was chosen as a conscious reply to the 'Hand of Fathme,' the luck-emblem of the Moslems, which is usually shown in gold or black. Our emblem is red: it stands for blood..."

Durieux then confirmed the responsibility of the "Red Hand" for six attacks -- among them the Schluter /See Note/, Ait Ahcene, and Puchert cases -- and concluded: "The 'Red Hand' is proud of the murders but does not gloat about them..."

(/Note/ The Hamburg can-maker Otto Schluter who, according to investigations by the Hamburg prosecutor, had never delivered war-weapons to North Africa, withdrew completely from the North Africa business after the second attack upon him. The wholesale weapon buyer of the Algerian rebels, Georg Puchert, sought him out twice at the end of 1958 and beginning of 1959 and was twice refused an audience. The bankruptcy liabilities of Schluter's "Hubertus-Metallwerke KG" which stood at DM 360,000 in 1953 have in the meantime been reduced to DM 80,000. The pending criminal proceeding in connection with the bankruptcy has been reduced from 23 charges to two which will be decided in the main proceeding.)

This declaration of the "Red Hand," printed in the press of three continents, called the Sûreté into play. The Commissioner for Press Affairs demanded from Jacobson a photocopy of the complete text and declared that the whole thing was a farce. There was no such thing as the "Red Hand." No French official had ever issued a pass with the name Durieux. The police were said to be looking for Durieux in the name of the Foreign Ministry at the time, and Jacobson would be informed as soon as he might be found.

Christian Durieux was not found by the regular police. Instead he himself established contact with his friend in the French secret police DST, for which he had himself worked once, and finally sought out the press again a week after the "Daily Mail" interview had appeared, on Sunday the 5th of December 1959 -- this time in the office of the German Press Agency in Paris.

He had been moved to this step by the advice he had requested from the lawyer and parliamentary deputy Jean Baptiste Biaggi.

Biaggi had for years been the defender of French terrorists; he defended among others the planners of an attack on Minister President Mendès-France and the executors of an attack on the "flabby" French commandant in Algeria, General Salan.

Like Durieux a Corsican, Biaggi belonged to the Corsican "ultras," conspirators on the Mafia pattern à la Arrighi, Battesti, and Cathala, who helped decisively on 13 May 1958 to overthrow by strike the Fourth Republic and to enthrone de Gaulle.

Meanwhile excluded from the Gaullist party, UNR, for which they entered the French Parliament after the May rising, these erstwhile stirrup-holders for de Gaulle are now right-extremist enemies of de Gaulle and his Fifth Republic.

After the failure of the second Algerian uprising at the beginning of this year, in which he was also involved, Biaggi was captured by de Gaulle's police as an enemy of the state and held for 18 days of interrogation before the officials released him last month.

He has an elegant 16-room apartment in Paris, surrounds himself with eccentric young men, and receives visitors in his bedroom.

At the head of his bed a machine pistol lies on the bed table; at the foot stands a Franciscan house-chaplain with folded hands to exhort the conspirator to pious courage.

Laughing, Biaggi said to SPIEGEL about Durieux: "He handled the business with the "Daily Mail" quite well ... but got frightened suddenly."

The extremist deputy advised the young Durieux to present the whole affair as a prank -- exactly as the Sûreté official had described it to Jacobson.

Durieux agreed and phoned the French secret police DST about his intention.

Thus on Saturday, 5 December 1959, Durieux rang at the Paris office of the German Press Agency in the Rue St. Augustin. He proposed a meeting outside the office -- at the archway of a bridge at the Porte de la Villette in the north of the city. Sign of identification: a certain newspaper in the hand.

Correspondent Hartmut Stein waited in vain under the bridge. Instead Durieux appeared in the Agency office in the afternoon. Again he identified himself by means of his identity card. Since his meeting with the "Daily Mail" correspondent he had grown a thin beard as disguise.

Durieux now stated that his disclosures had been calculated to damage German-French relations. True to the advice from Biaggi, he said that the whole thing had been a student prank. He had only blown the story up in order to let the air out of it again ("gonfler l'affaire pour la faire crever ensuite").

Durieux had hardly left the Agency office -- the news had not yet gone over the ticker -- when the French Ministry of the Interior called to inquire whether Durieux had been there and delivered his dementi -- the same Ministry which had a few weeks earlier replied to a confidential German inquiry that: "Neither the 'Red Hand' nor Christian Durieux exists. The only Durieux who fit the description given by Wolf and SPIEGEL fell in Indo-China."

Under these bizarre circumstances -- after Durieux had named himself as a key figure in the "Red Hand" and then acted as an agent of French government officials -- a thorough investigation of his identity and role seemed appropriate.

The SPIEGEL established contact with the allegedly undiscoverable Durieux in the middle of February 1960 and set a date for a meeting on 21 February -- according to his wishes outside France and Germany in Switzerland.

On the day before this meeting Durieux saw his erstwhile employer in the French secret police DST and told him of the planned conversation with SPIEGEL. As he himself admitted, he was then advised not to undertake the trip, and his pass and identity card were taken as a precaution. Thanks to influential friends he was still able to cross the French border.

Punctually at ten A.M. on Sunday a small, pale man of Southern European aspect opened the door of the appointed inn in a mountain village.

On the breast pocket of his dingy blue jacket shone a great German sovereign eagle in gold with swastika. He raised his hand in a "German greeting" and said quietly: "I am Christian Durieux."

The SPIEGEL had brought to the rendezvous, in accordance with the Frenchman's wishes, the assurance from German security authorities of the long-sought free passage should he elect to testify in the Federal Republic. Furthermore, two officials of the Algerian rebels were present, FLN delegates Malek and Kassim from Bonn, to whom Durieux wanted to offer a private truce.

Durieux approached hesitatingly. He had two countrymen with him. No one present could miss the trembling of his hands as he drank his coffee. He said, "That comes from the cold." His beard was shaved off.

At the inn table he then announced, "I have come in order to serve truth ... but I must hold to the denial (suggested by Biaggi and approved by the French secret police)."

This effort to serve two superiors -- Biaggi and the truth -- led to this sentence: "I am one of the creators and organizers of the 'Red Hand' but I am no killer. Furthermore, I have separated myself from my friends and now speak only for myself. I am disappointed in the results of the attacks, disappointed, disappointed."

Durieux continued: "I am still of the opinion that the arms traders who are getting rich on the Algerian war must be deprived of their business -- also and especially in the Germany that I love and admire."

Who is this strange friend of Germany? Roger, called Christian, Durieux was born on 11 May 1929 in Tlélat in the Oran Department of West Algeria, the son of a gendarm. The family prides itself on its Corsican origin which, to Christian Durieux, accounts for his noticeable resemblance to the young Napoleon.

Father Durieux, now dead, performed his police service in Thiersville, a small locality 20 kilometers south of Mascara in Oran. The mother and sister of Christian Durieux still live in this village.

Durieux went to school first in Thiersville, then at the Gymnasium of Oran, the capital of the Department on the West Algerian Mediterranean coast with its Spanish influence.

The end of his school years occurred after World War II as the students were relating ever new tales of French Maquis heroics under German occupation. At this time Durieux decided to engage in similar adventures as soon as he completed school.

His practical exercises occurred at first in the realm of amour: one night he scaled the high wall of a carefully protected residence for young girls in the center of the city and after some foolhardy climbing entered a room on the second floor.

The adventure ended in dejected retreat as the alert sisters of the "Holy Heart of Jesus," who operated the residence, discovered the invader and chased him away.

After Durieux failed his final exams at the school in Oran, he left the city and went to Paris where he succeeded on a second try in graduating from school.

Durieux was at that time in no way hostile toward Arabs; he looked upon the North Africans with the mixture of scorn and paternalism usual among the French in Algeria. But he early developed into an anti-Semite, changing his name from Roger to Christian, because "Roger sounds so Jewish."

He performed his military service in Germany, first with an artillery regiment in Pfalz, later at an officers' school in Idar-Oberstein. His request for transfer to Algeria was refused. But his wish to fight the Arab nationalists was fulfilled after his release from military service in a non-military form: he became a member of a special brigade of secret police DST for North Africa.

At the invitation of a young man with artistic tendencies whom Durieux had met in Saarbrücken, the Napoleonic Milkface traveled to Hamburg in summer 1954; he soon learned to speak German quite well.

He preferred to wear black riding boots and a coat cut like an officer's cape. His habit of posing with his arm across his chest in Napoleonic style resulted in his being called generally "the little Napoleon."

His resemblance to Napoleon was also useful to him in earning a living. In the cellar club, "The Hideout" (now called "Enfant Terrible"), in Hamburg he gave a short pantomime as Napoleon.

He also offered his acting talents to the German film industry: he appeared as a supernumerary in "Wunschkonzert" filmed by the Jungen Film Union of Hamburg.

Durieux lived on the premises of a widow of advanced age in the artist's quarter of Hamburg-Grossflottbek, except for a few weeks which he spent at no cost with an older woman in Alsterterrasse.

Durieux, poor but charming and vital, for some time spent his days dancing with the young girls of the neighborhood in his favorite haunt, the "Barett."

Eventually he gave in to his woman-friend and accepted work as a vacation teacher of French at the Hamburg Berlitz School.

Again Durieux enjoyed special favor among teenagers and middle-aged females -- until in October it became known that he was enticing his female students into pornographic photography after school hours.

The photo studio in which the pictures of the language students were taken and stored by the hundreds was located in the basement of a photography school in Rothenbaumchaussee.

One student, a bright 16 year old girl, her wish to move in with her Napoleon in the artists' quarter refused by the landlady, resided for a time in the photo-cellar without the knowledge of the other house residents. As she was returned by her father to her good middle-class home, Durieux ended his teaching activity.

Durieux was discharged. During the final scene in the director's office, he threatened on the basis of his status of conqueror in the past war to throw furniture and typewriters out the window unless he received letters of recommendation and at least an additional month's pay. The school administration acceded to his wishes.

For another two months Durieux lived in the artists' quarter with his landlady. But the elderly lady grew tired of her numerous adolescent female guests. Early in 1955 Durieux left for the storied land of women, Sweden.

With a French traveling theater company he played at Swedish castles, preferably at those which had no male owners. Later he gave private French lessons in Stockholm and earned extra money in local cafes by drawing portraits.

His political opinions grew more extreme in the land that he called "the Land of the Vikings." He called himself a fascist and wore black shirts as external evidence of his political views.

But his encounter with the police in summer 1957 arose not out of political but out of sexual offenses.

After the clearing of a secret club, "Banjo," in which older men were provided with girl students from Stockholm Lycees and effeminate youths of good family, it could not be proved that Durieux was directly involved in the enterprise but he was ordered to leave Sweden.

Durieux says now, "Without being guilty I was included in a group of theater friends who had aroused the enmity of the police morals squad."

The "little Napoleon" then returned to Paris with his experiences and newly learned languages in fall 1957 where in the same year he was -- according to the leftist paper "L'Express" -- "retired without pay" as an inspector by the secret police DST.

It is certain that he lived in the Rue Solferino No. 7 in Paris during the winter of 1957/58 and gave language lessons in a private school outside Paris. He also met with all sorts of rightist radicals in the Latin Quarter, mainly at the "Capoulade" in the Boulevard St. Michel, and evolved plans for uprisings. His friends called him "Romeo" or "Zazou."

In May 1958 during the army uprising in Algeria, Durieux organized wild demonstrations in front of the National Assembly for his rightist politician and lawyer patron, Biaggi, with the intention of alarming and frightening the deputies of the Fourth Republic.

In fall of the same year he began his mission in Germany. As courier between the rightist conspirators determined to win by any means in Algeria and the Liquidation-Commandos stationed in Germany, he transmitted instructions and money.

One of his meeting places was the "Igel" bar in Bonn. He was seen there a few days before Puchert's murder repeatedly meeting in a confidential circle with those two Frenchmen still sought by the German criminal police: Scarface Pedro who threatened Puchert several times during December in Frankfurt and who boasted in the "Igel" that he had shot down the FLN delegate Ait Ahcene; and "Killer" Jean Viari, the erstwhile police inspector sought by Moroccan security authorities for his part in several attacks in Morocco between 1953 and 1956.

On 14 March 1959 eleven days after Puchert's murder, as the great search for the terrorist trio had begun, the three sat in the "China Bar" in the Klapperhof district of Cologne, their last time together in Germany.

The staff member of the French Press Attaché in Bonn, Louis Hirn, whose name would soon be mentioned by Paris papers in connection with "Red Hand," was also in Cologne that day, but, as he informed SPIEGEL, at a reception given by Otto Stolz, founder of "Rescue Freedom."

But the reception of the "freedom rescuers" ended much earlier than the party in the China Bar, which broke up only in the early morning hours. The French diplomat, Louis Hirn, pointedly denies having put up the terrorist Viari for the rest of the night in his house in Bad Godesberg, Denglerstrasse 50.

And the French Ambassador Seydoux characterized the suspicions about Hirn as having been "taken from thin air." Yet Hirn is today seeking a new position; and his direct superior, Morizet, was called back to Paris as of 1 January of this year.

If the departure of Viari remains a mystery, Durieux's is substantiated. He used a delivery truck of the cognac firm "Camus," a Citroen with the number 691 AT 16. The truck is registered under this number in Nice in the name of the cognac firm's representative there. It is uncertain whether Durieux undertook the whole trip back to France in this truck. He said to SPIEGEL smilingly, "I did not cross the German border in this truck. Beyond that I must stick to my denial."

But if the French government hoped at the end of last year to have dismissed the "Red Hand" as a rumor by means of the Durieux denial, it was disappointed. Within the month the SPD deputy in the Bundestag [lower house of German parliament], Hans Jurgen Wischniewski, who is sympathetic with the FLN rebels, received on New Year's morning a warning from the Bonn security group of the Federal Criminal Office by telephone: "The 'Red Hand' is active again."

Just before and just after the Durieux affair the "Red Hand" had struck in Germany; again the efforts of this "student prank" were marked by the killed and mutilated.

This concentration of the terror in Germany has many-sided causes: the FLN opened its European center in Germany because it hoped to be able from there to direct its action and to mobilize German resentment against France for its Algerian cause.

Moreover, there have been personal connections since the time of the Grand Mufti between Arab nationalists and former Nazi circles, and these are still maintained and utilized. There is a direct line between German military experts under former military supply leader Voss in Egypt and German arms suppliers with a Nazi past who supply the Algerian rebellion with support.

A new kind of spiritual kinship could be established by the Algerians in their fight against the traditional French enemy with the SPD, traditionally favorable to struggles of colonial peoples for independence and also ready to join with any enemy of Adenauer's French ally in its pursuit of the internal struggle against the Chancellor.

The vigorous activity of the FLN in Germany and the resulting attacks have, however, also a very practical basis: nowhere in Europe is it so easy to manipulate armaments as in the country that requires a license for every hunting rifle -- in the Federal Republic.

After the end of the war the Control Council Order No. 2, Law No. 43, and later the allied Law No. 24 (of 30 March 1950) all forbade the "manufacture and production, import, export, transmission,

storing, or use of all weapons ... all guns ... all vehicles equipped specifically for military purposes ... warships of all types ... and airplanes of every type."

Allied Law No. 38 of 5 May 1955 lifted this embracing prohibition so that Article 26, paragraph 2 of the Basic Law could take effect: "Weapons designed for warfare may be manufactured, transported, or marketed only with the permission of the Federal Government. Details will be regulated by federal law."

The Cabinet and Bundestag were, however, in no hurry with the armament law. The Government relies now as it has for the past five years upon four mutually supplementary "Announcements."

The official record stated: "Until the promulgation of the law called for in Article 26, paragraph 2, of the Basic Law, requests for permission to manufacture, transport, or trade in armaments are to be sent to the Economics Ministry."

The Economics Ministry added, thereby limiting the constitutional provision: "In Article 26, paragraph 2, of the Basic Law the import, export, and through-transport of military weapons are not named as matters requiring permission."

The Algerian rebels, who pray for machine pistols as good Christian Democrats pray for daily bread and atomic weapons, could not overlook this opening. The permitted "import, export, and through-transport of military weapons" let West Germany become a most important stage for the North African rebels and their arms suppliers -- and therewith a battlefield for the "Red Hand."

In their woeful laments about the "jungle war" in the Federal Republic, German politicians and papers studiously ignore this point -- that sloppy German legislation had invited rebels and terrorists into West Germany.

More than that, German officials participated in this arms traffic while the murder series was still in process. In fall 1959 an office of the North Rhine Westphalian police, under the direction of the CDU Minister of Interior Dufhues, offered interested North Africans a shipment of 1,500 American Mauser pistols with which the American Occupation had equipped the German police after the war.

Only at the end of last year did the ministerial Councillor Dr. Heinze of the Economics Ministry finally prepare a proposed "executing law for Article 26, paragraph 2, of the Basic Law (military weapons

law)" in which the "manufacture, transport, and trade of military weapons" is made punishable in Germany without a license from the Economics Ministry.

Four years ago such a law would have sufficed to avoid most of the lamented "Red Hand" attacks in Germany. Because there was no such law Germany became the stage for deadly games.

An arrest at the end of January of this year shows that at least the criminal police expect a continuation of such games and a new series of attacks in 1960. On 22 January at 7:00 A.M., a Bulgarian, Kanio Tonchev-Losev, was arrested in his apartment in Telemannstrasse 4 in Frankfurt. His many-faceted business activities are described in the telephone book as "International Relations."

As official reason for the arrest it sufficed to recall an earlier sentence for assault and battery against Tonchev which he was now to begin serving. Actually, however, the arrest was called for by the Bonn security group of the Federal Criminal Office.

The security group had discovered that Tonchev was a friend of the FLN functionary Abd el-Kader Noassri who was supervising Algerian arms purchases after Puchert's murder.

The Bulgarian had used this friendship to photograph about 30 arms dealers who were doing business with his friend Noassri. Tonchev offered these pictures for sale to the highest bidder in January.

Panic was loosed among Frankfurt arms dealers. Puchert's business friend, Helmuth Muller, warned in 1958 by the French colonel of intelligence Marcel Mercier to leave the Algerian business alone, asked for police protection.

In order to prevent if possible the sale of the pictures to the "Red Hand" the police remembered the old sentence against Tonchev and put him behind bars.

Tonchev's photo auction was triggered by the disappearance of his friend Noassri from the Frankfurt scene. This new chief-buyer for the Algerian revolution had left the field just as voluntarily as had his predecessor Puchert. On the last day of 1959, ten months after Puchert's murder, his successor Noassri, 28, was also the object of a "Red Hand" explosive attack in Frankfurt.

Four days before Puchert's death, Noassri was recipient of the last letter from Puchert: "Am very worried, being followed. Had an unpleasant surprise (Mercier). Must speak to you."

Since Noassri had himself already been chased out of Switzerland by Colonel Mercier in 1956, he knew that this colonel did not like to be crossed. He therefore maintained greater caution than his predecessor after Puchert's murder in March 1959. He hardly used a taxi -- and then only one parked in a long row at a stand -- and changed his apartment frequently.

All of his mail was sent to a post office box No. 2721 in Frankfurt and picked up by an agent.

Shortly before Christmas 1959, however, Noassri himself went to the box, sorted his mail there, threw the advertisements away, stuck the important letters in his pocket, and read the rest.

Among his mail on this day was a pocket calendar from a Hamburg bank where he had a dollar account. He pocketed the calendar but incautiously threw the package in the post office wastebasket.

The agents of "Red Hand" who kept watch on Noassri constantly, as well as on the post office, fished this calendar package from the wastebasket after Noassri had gone, prepared an imitation, and used this as a container for their kind of Christmas present: an explosive mechanism.

A few days later, after Noassri had moved to the Frankfurt Hotel Palmenhof, a postman brought the Algerian his mail from the post office box to the hotel on the day before New Year's about 10:00 A.M., for Noassri wanted to take the morning plane from Rhine-Main airport to North Africa.

The postman entered as Noassri was already waiting in the hall with hat, heavy winter coat, and suitcase ready to leave.

Noassri put the letters and a small package unopened into his pocket and looked at his watch, noting that the rented car which would take him to the airport was late.

He used the unexpected delay to take his leave once again from his closest associate, an Algerian living in the same hotel. This late-sleeper was still in bed -- a fact that he should not lament. For while Noassri, pacing up and down the floor, told his friend a few unimportant things while looking at his watch and out the window, he opened his mail, almost automatically, something that he had actually wanted to do at his leisure in the airplane.

The little package -- Noassri probably thought it a second pocket calendar sent him by mistake by the bank -- he opened without the slightest uneasiness.

As Noassri tore off the string the explosive contents of the package detonated. The explosion was so powerful that it tore off both of his hands, demolished the room, and sent the windows and frames flying on to the street. Only the facts that he opened the package while standing and that he was wearing a heavy coat saved Noassri's life.

Regaining consciousness in a hospital room under police guard, Noassri murmured, "Praise Allah that it happened here in Germany where one can buy new hands."

It became clear next morning what hands the Frankfurt police and prosecutor were seeking when the social democratic sympathizer with Algeria, Wischnewski, received the police warning to use care in opening his New Year's mail with its many small packages and pocket calendars: "The 'Red Hand' is active again."

The attack on the Algerian arms buyer Abd el-Kader Noassri is to be sure the last use of explosives so far by the "Red Hand," but was by no means the only reason for the police warning. Since the death of Puchert, when the expression "Red Hand" first gained currency in Germany, other occurrences and murders changed police suspicion into certainty that they were dealing with a powerful political organization.

These events also had roots in the Algerian conflict. If the attacks on Schluter (Hamburg), Puchert, and Noassri (Frankfurt) were related to arms supplies for the rebels, the second series of murders -- like the attack on Ait Ahcene -- was directed against political functionaries of the FLN. The pivot of these attacks was Belgium.

Shortly after midnight on 3 October 1959 a Ford Versailles stopped with three men at the Belgian customs house at Bleharies on the Franco-Belgian border.

Although the Belgian customs official, Fernand Dorchies, recognized the driver as dentist Andre Kuarez from nearby Saint Amand, he asked the routine question, what was contained in the package held in ostentatious innocence by one of the passengers. "Cognac," was the reply.

Dorchies demanded that the travelers open the package. What emerged was not cognac but rather more than a kilogram of that plastic explosive, two thimbles of which are enough to destroy effectively a large room with all the people in it.

The ensuing examination of the car revealed a machine pistol and ammunition. The three men did not resist arrest. They were: Dentist Andre Kuarez from Saint Amand, 36, ex-paratrooper in Algeria; locksmith Claude Housseaux, 36, of Cambrai; and former Poujadist deputy in

the National Assembly (1956-1958) and paperhanger Jean-Claude Berthomier, 37, of Etampes.

The arrested terrorists first tried to talk themselves out of the situation with unbelievable stories to the effect that the package belonged to an unknown hitch-hiker they had picked up.

They later admitted that the explosive had been intended for an attack on the ex-boxer and Algerian owner of the cafe "Le Progrès" in Belgian Charleroi, Chérif Attar.

While this explanation may have been uncomfortable for the Belgian Minister of Justice who had just labeled reports of "Red Hand" activities in Belgium as "phantasy," its worth is questionable.

Chérif Attar was to be sure Algerian and sympathizes with the rebels, but he was neither a leader nor official of FLN.

"I don't know why they wanted to kill me," Attar stated uneasily; he has meanwhile emigrated to Tunisia.

The first warning Attar received reached him only after the arrest of the terrorists, manifestly as confirmation of the arrested men's story. The threat was in typical "Red Hand" style and read as follows:

"Mr. Attar Chérif, Chief of the FLN bushrobbers, 'Cafe du Progrès,' Charleroi. Who gave you the permission to reside here and conspire against France, you old savage from the Arab bush? Go to Tunisia and fight, that would be more courageous, you traitor. In France you risk the death penalty, for you are an FLN rebel and bushrobber. You have no business here in Belgium; we don't want any dirty Arabs in Belgium. In Paris we'll see to it that France demands your surrender. Long live French Tunisia! Death to the Fellahin! Too bad that the three did not succeed in blowing up your store, that refuge for fellahin and lawbreakers. The Red Hand."

Yet it is probable that the explosives transported to Belgium were not intended for the bar-owner Attar but rather for attacks in Germany. For the "Red Hand" had already planned for 4 October, a day after the border arrest, a new attack on the car of an FLN emissary passing through Bonn.

Without explosives the terrorists had this time to try a new method. On the morning of 4 October seven men surrounded the limousine of the Algerian courier just as he and the driver entered the car.

The new method proved imperfect. At the same moment as the "Red Hand" agents approached the car, half a dozen muscular, dark-skinned figures emerged from the Sunday crowd. The FLN Algerians had suspected trouble and taken measures. Surprised, the kidnappers took to their heels before the brawl could get started.

The "Red Hand" struck again in the same month on the Rhine -- this time successfully, again with deadly effect, and again the trail led to Belgium.

On the evening of 22 October 1959 the FLN functionary Ahmed Nesbah, once organizational head of the "Mouvement National Algérien," a group competing with FLN, was shot in Cologne.

It was not the first time that this rival organization had been mentioned in connection with the "Red Hand."

The General Secretary of MNA, Moulai Merbah, had been ejected from Switzerland in 1956 by Colonel Mercier of the French secret service with the help of state attorney René Dubois who later committed suicide. Merbah then resided several years in Cologne and left the city only a few days before the murder of his erstwhile friend in October 1959 to take up residence in Bavaria.

The second time the letters MNA appeared was in connection with the murder of FLN delegate Ait Ahcene in November 1958 in Bonn: Ben Ali Mahdani who rented the green Mercedes from which Ait Ahcene was shot by Scarface Pedro was -- as deputy chief of the Federal Criminal Office Dickopf ascertained in Paris -- a functionary of the MNA.

Both connections in which MNA appeared show how two-sided the relationship is between MNA and the French officials; in any event they share a deadly hatred, along with the "Red Hand," for the FLN.

The MNA rejects the terroristic methods of the FLN in Algeria. Its leader, the bearded Messali Hadsch, who has struggled for forty years by democratic means for the independence of Algeria, is living under French police watch in Chantilly near Paris.

Although MNA could never establish a stronghold in the Algerian mountains controlled by the FLN army, MNA partisans ruled large areas of the Sahara in the south of Algeria. Thousands of Algerians in France stream to the Sunday gatherings of Messali Hadsch in Chantilly.

The MNA leader Ahmed Nesbah, shot in October 1959 in Cologne, had changed sides from MNA to FLN between Christmas and New Year's eve 1958. Taking with him his eleven closest cohorts, several hundred pounds of

documents, a well-filled war chest, several cars, and a small arsenal, he traveled by way of Saarbrücken and Bonn to Tunis, the seat of the FLN rebel government.

Turncoat Ahmed Nesbah maintained that he was moved to this change by the financial and political dependence of MNA on the French counter-intelligence and the participation of MNA in several deeds of the "Red Hand."

He and his cohorts were sent by the FLN, after thorough interrogation and brain-washing, back to Europe early in 1959 to convert MNA followers remaining in Belgium and the Saar to the FLN.

The dangers of this mission soon became clear: the twelve were hardly in Europe again when on 19 January 1959 one of them, Soualem, was shot on the steps of the railway station in Saarbrücken. The perpetrators, former friends of the victim in MNA, escaped to France.

In the following months five more of the turncoats disappeared, some into Belgian prisons, some into the morgue.

A seventh was denounced in Trier and arrested by German police. Another, Hamidouche Mokhtar, who had lived for years in the Saar and then moved to Cologne, was hauled out of bed one morning by Cologne police without a warrant and handed over to French gendarmes in Saargemünd. He is now in the Paris prison Santé.

On 22 October 1959 Ahmed Nesbah with two of his remaining three associates -- Outaleb Ramdane, former general secretary of the MNA union, USTA, and Khaldi Boussef -- whiled away three hours in the Hotel "Ninety" in Cologne drinking coffee and lemonade with two Algerians of the MNA they were trying to convert to FLN.

Then Ahmed Nesbah paid the bill and they closed the meeting with the customary cheek-kissing.

Nesbah and his followers went to the parking lot adjoining the hotel with the MNA men following a ways behind. A few seconds later pistol shots were heard. Ahmed Nesbah was killed. Outaleb Ramdane was shot in the stomach. Only Khaldi Boussef saved himself by jumping behind a car.

It took four hours for the Cologne police to get descriptions of circumstances and perpetrators from the upset Boussef in a mixture of French and Arabic. Meanwhile the murderers had made good their escape. They first ate in another restaurant and then called a taxi and began their trip across the border on the same day.

About 10:15 P.M. they reached the German-Belgian border at Aachen; both German and Belgian border control let them pass.

The Belgian patrol noticed the two Algerians because of their excitement, but he attributed this to their having been unable to pay their Cologne taxi driver in full. They paid him 65 marks instead of the 80 demanded and promised to send the rest by mail. Since they could show French identity papers of recent date neither the taxi driver nor the customs official kept them from passing into Belgium.

The "blitz" teletype of the Cologne police with descriptions and request to hold the two supposed murderers arrived at the border early on 23 October. By then the two were far away.

The two perpetrators who so comfortably escaped the German police were: Idir Boudjemmer, called "Farid," born 1933, identity card number 4602, member of an alert-group of MNA near Jeumont, last resident in Luttich; and Rabah Chittabi, called "Si Rabah," born 1932, identity card number 21,169, head of a MNA alert-group in Valenciennes, last residing in Luttich.

Luttich, to which the murderers of Ahmed Nesbah escaped, is actually an outpost of the "Red Hand" where many MNA and French counter-intelligence trails meet. With the murder in Cologne, directed from Luttich, the "Red Hand" completed its assassination methods in Germany as they had also been practiced in other countries:

The arms dealer Georg Puchert was blown up by means of an explosive charge on his car in Frankfurt, the means used against Schluter in Hamburg, the French attorney Thuveny in Rabat, and the FLN delegate Boulahrouf in Rome;

Puchert's successor, Noassri of FLN, received in the mail an explosive package resembling those received by the wife of the Strassburg Prefect, Henriette Tremmeaud, and by a pharmacist in Morocco, both of whom died in opening the packages;

FLN delegate Ait Ahcene was killed in Bonn by a machine-pistol volley from a passing car, just as was former Minister President Mendès-France's millionaire friend Lemaigre-Dubreuil in Morocco in 1955;

MNA turncoat Ahmed Nesbah was killed in Cologne by revolver fire, as was the first prominent victim of the "Red Hand," the Tunisian freedom fighter Ferhat Hached, in 1952.

Then, eight years ago, the fight began in North Africa, which has meanwhile spread to Europe, in which French terrorists tried to prevent France's colonial demise. Then -- in 1952 in Tunisia -- the first "Red Hand" was founded.

Next week: The Birth of the "Red Hand" -- an Assassin Relates --
France's Commander Survives by Mistake.

A dozen deaths in five countries is the bag of France's "Red Hand" terrorists on the European battlefield neighboring the fight for Algeria. Ships were sunk, cars blown up, arms dealers and Algerian rebels died. This underground terror-war began ten years ago in North Africa with the same methods and -- in part -- with the same participants.

Second Installment

The death merry-go-round of murder, torture, and mutilation, of native terror and French counter-terror, which is now turning also in Germany, began in 1950 in the former French protectorate of Tunisia.

There started the development which has led to assassinations in Hamburg, Rome, Geneva, and Frankfurt. For then the Tunisian rebels of the "Neo-Déistour" party began a guerrilla war to which the French police and army with legal methods were no longer equal.

Fields went up in flames, factories were demolished, telephone poles were cut down, rail beds blown up, Europeans attacked and robbed. As the French military defeat in the Far East against the Red Indo-chinese was getting under way, the settlers in Tunisia, mostly small farmers, artisans, and officials of Italian origin, organized themselves for self-defense. The most powerful of these organizations combined the red color of the Mafia with the name of the Islamic luck-symbol, "the hand of Fathme," and called itself the "Red Hand."

An active staff officer of the French army became head of the Tunisian "Red Hand." The organization maintained alert-groups in all cities, most of them under command of an ex-soldier and operating with one or two cars in localities where they did not reside.

The task of the alert-groups was to keep the local leaders of the "Neo-Déistour" party in line, through threats, reprisals, kidnapping, or -- when necessary -- through murder.

The greater the brutality of France's sworn enemies against the wives and children of their opponent, the more brutal the counter-terror became. Murder and assassination methods were perfected. The

cooperation of French terrorists with army and government, observable today in Europe, was worked out. The secret service got itself involved. The first threads of the network now spanning all of North Africa and Europe were joined under the name "Red Hand."

On 3 December 1952 a war council met in Tunis, involving at least two colonels and three police officials with the terrorists, and evolved the plan for a murder in the style of the "Red Hand."

The chosen victim was Tunisian union leader Ferhad Hached, a simple dock worker who had cleansed the union of communist as well as French influence and made it into a vanguard of Tunisian nationalism.

The direction of the assassination of this man was entrusted to Lucien Rouveure, an intelligence officer feared even by the controller of the Tunisian police, an Alsatian named Schwertz, and his commissioner Gillet.

Rouveure needed the next day for preparations, the 4th of December 1952. The episode which emerged under his direction is of historical interest for it discloses with unusual clarity the cooperative efforts of terrorists and French officials as they have been practiced since -- also in Germany.

On the morning of 5 December 1952, a few minutes after 8:00 A.M., the Tunisian union leader Ferhad Hached left his house in Radès about ten kilometers from Tunis to drive into the capitol.

Behind him the street was barred by police, traffic bound for Tunis stopped. In the nearby harbor of La Goulette a motorboat from Biserte was waiting to remove secretly the corpse of the union leader.

Ferhad Hached noticed nothing of this. He had, to be sure, already received a threatening letter signed with a red hand in November; this he had sent on to his friend Salah Ben Youssef who was in New York for the UN debate on Tunisia. And the French resident general in Tunisia had told the then Minister President Pinay verbally that Hached's life was in danger. But Ferhad Hached's only security measure was to send his family to relatives in the port Sousse.

Hached had traveled about two kilometers and was just passing a cemetery wall when a volley of shots from an overtaking Citroen went over his head.

He stopped, jumped from the car, and ran. The other car also stopped and one of its occupants fired at the fleeing Hached who fell to the earth. The Citroen drove on and stopped in a side street a hundred meters further on.

Several people witnessed this occurrence: a field worker some 50 meters away, a shepherd boy, a cyclist, and the occupants, three Europeans, of a small truck coming from the other direction.

All of them saw how Hached lifted himself from the ground slightly wounded. He asked the truck driver, a man named Serre, to take him to a hospital in Tunis. The driver hesitated for he was bound for Radès and feared getting blood on his upholstery.

At this moment a Simca-Aronde appeared with three European occupants. They were bound for Tunis and willing to take the wounded man with them. Hached got in at 8:25 A.M.; it was his last ride.

Twenty minutes later a lifeless body was found in a ditch, riddled with bullets, some five kilometers from the site of the initial attack.

Among the officers who "found" him were policemen who left Tunis to look for the corpse at 8:25 A.M. -- at a time when Hached was still alive.

The activity which unfolded next on the part of the French preservers of order is no less mysterious. They loaded the body in their car, removed all traces, and returned to the scene of the first attack. There an officer swept away all tire tracks with a broom brought for the purpose, another collected the empty cartridge casings, a third drove the dead man's car away. The car was later parked in the yard of the military court. The corpse was taken to the military hospital and, nearly four hours after the crime, the prosecutor's office was notified of the incident.

Meanwhile union friends of Hached learned of the first attack. A Tunisian motorist who had seen Hached's empty, bullet-riddled car on the street called the union headquarters. Two secretaries drove immediately toward Radès. On the way they met Hached's car driven by a policeman in civilian clothes. They drove on.

At the place of the first attack they found glass splinters and a cartridge missed by the policemen. The field worker and shepherd boy told them what they had seen.

The two union men therefore thought that Hached still lived and started to look for him. They went first to the next police station in Mégrine where the chief said he knew nothing about it, although the eye witnesses recognized him as having been present when the car was being taken away.

The next stop for the union men was the Commissariat of Hammam Lif where the Commissar maintained that he knew nothing about the case. In fact he had been present when the corpse was taken out of Tunis by the police.

The third stop was the police station in Radès. On the desk of the chief the union secretaries saw the dead man's wallet and several cartridge shells. The chief caused the wallet to disappear and said that he knew nothing about the case.

The last stop for the two Tunisians was the police station in Tunis. There they again encountered the Commissar and the chiefs who had just told them that they had no information. In the courtyards the policemen were in uniform and were receiving steel helmets and machine pistols. It appeared that a large alarm was going on.

In the succeeding hours all of the friends of the murdered man were arrested. The Tunisian investigating judge was replaced by a French colleague. This Frenchman, Buthaud by name, appears however to have refused to cooperate with the official cover-up. He was replaced on the same day by the judge Soulet, an accomplice of the "Red Hand."

Judge Soulet made not the slightest attempt at investigation. Although in all of Tunisia there were not 350 cars of the type Simca-Aronde in which Hached was taken away while still alive, the case was closed in a few months as fruitless.

Meanwhile even the French press in Paris became indignant. On 8 January 1953 "France-Observateur" observed: "A high French official in Tunisia gave the resident general the list of French participants in the 'Red Hand' assassination shortly after it occurred. Among the names on the list are those of police officials. The list was sent to Paris for reasons of security ... but nothing has happened in this connection."

Another French journalist writing in "Le Monde," Daniel Guérin, characterized two police commissars, Pietrangeli and Santonini, as probable participants.

The next time these two were heard from half a year later it was in an official announcement of promotions and decorations which included both Santonini and Pietrangeli.

Such leadership, planning, and organization of the "Red Hand" soon made it the most dangerous power in Tunisia. But that which was to happen later -- if not to the same extent -- in Morocco, Algeria,

and finally in Europe was already going on here: the agents were getting out of control. Criminal elements of the "Red Hand" were extricating themselves from the leadership of the French patriots, were beginning to shoot down Arabs for the fun of it, and were carrying on a profitable blackmail business with threats against wealthy Tunisians.

Having once strayed from the path of legality, French officials and the leaders of the "Red Hand" felt themselves unable to regain control and break up the racket without endangering themselves.

Only with the granting of autonomy to Tunisia in 1956 did the activities of the "Red Hand" there cease. Already in 1953, according to the Paris newspaper "Franc-Tireur," 72 lives had been lost; what the figure may have been three years later can only be guessed. And at that the most experienced "Red Hand" activists had already moved on to new fields in Morocco and Algeria.

The open rebellion against colonial rule in the French protectorate of Morocco, separated from Tunisia by the whole width of Algeria, began almost three years later than the Tunisian uprising. The arrest, dethronement, and deportation of the erstwhile Sultan and present King Mohammed V in August 1953 gave the signal. The leadership of the independence movement rested with the nationalist party "Istiqlal."

In Morocco, too, the native terrorism released French counter-action. Again the settlers, officials, and soldiers took matters into their own hands and founded the "Présence Française." The terrorist stormtroops of the Moroccan organization for self-protection, corresponding to the "Red Hand" in Tunisia, were the "Black Hand" ("La Main Noire"), the ODAT and AGIR. But their practices were the same: well organized and unscrupulous attacks by a peculiar mixture of idealists, profiteers, and bandits against all enemies of France.

At the end of 1953 a young French police officer, inspector Forestier, himself a former terrorist, presented his superior in Casablanca with material about this terror organization. Included therein was a list of the next victims. The following assassinations confirmed in blood the authenticity of this list. Inspector Forestier could not enjoy his professional triumph. He died a few weeks after his meddlesome discovery in January 1954 -- in a "traffic accident."

The two characteristic elements of "Red Hand" activity in Tunisia, later reduplicated in Algeria and Germany, repeated themselves in Morocco: the support of French officials and misuse of political action for personal gain.

Two additional characteristics of the terror appeared however in Morocco and were later observable in Algeria and Europe: assassinations were aimed not only at Moslems but also at French advocates of understanding and were then attributed to the rebels in order to excite French indignation; and assassinations displayed their roots in that dark chapter of French history when the nation was split between followers of Vichy and the resistance.

The first category includes two unsuccessful attacks on the erstwhile Minister President Mendès-France, who had just fallen because of the loss of Indochina, and a likewise unsuccessful attack on the much-decorated flier from the Second World War and parliamentary deputy Pierre Clostermann and on the French Resident General in Morocco, the former Saar Commissioner Gilbert Grandval.

The murder of the industrial millionaire Jacques Lemaigre-Dubreuil on 11 June 1955 in Casablanca belongs in the second category.

Years after these attacks, by an unlucky accident, French justice got its hands on someone who could give almost complete information about all of these assassinations.

On 24 April 1958 a certain Louis Damiani was confronted in Paris with the investigating judge Martial Larocque in the presence of the clerk Chatel and the attorney Dreyfus. He had been caught in the act of robbery in 1957 in the vicinity of the capital.

Damiani's testimony related only incidentally to the robbery. Larocque told him repeatedly that his testimony was irrelevant, but Damiani insisted upon its transcription because, as he said, it "is important for my defense."

What the Paris judge so unwillingly allowed as testimony and what Damiani had to say for his defense consists of his participation in at least a dozen Moroccan murders for France.

The protocol of his testimony reads: "At the end of 1954 when I was in Casablanca I was taken in to the movement 'Présence Française' by friends. It was led by a Dr. Causse and was fighting Moroccan terror and nationalism by counter-terror, or attacks on personalities of the 'Istiqlal' party, or on certain French personalities favorable to independence."

Dr. Causse, a physician from Casablanca, had built up the "Présence Française" as a self-defense organization of the settlers and, as loyal agent of French financial interests in Morocco, he was well supplied with funds.

He was the manager of a four-day bloodbath in Casablanca which began on the French national holiday, 14 July 1955, and, like the events in Algiers early this year, was directed against native rebels and a weak French administration.

While in Casablanca the European women challenged their men to kill the "Moroccan rats," indignant colonists in Rabat pulled the cap from the head of resident general Grandval, spit upon him, and tore off his epaulettes.

The initiator of the uprising and leader of "Présence Française," Dr. Causse, was ejected from Morocco by French authorities. His helper, Louis Damiani, testified three years later: "I also add that I kept Dr. Causse in my apartment for 24 hours after he was banished from the country."

Between the first contact of Damiani with the "Présence Française" late in 1954 and his hiding of Causse in mid-1955 lies that three-quarters of a year in which the Liquidation-Command of the settlers' organization staged their most numerous and vigorous assassinations.

Damiani reported on this time and his activity: "I must say that I myself ... have shot at Moslems with the revolver..."

"I admit also that I had an arsenal in my apartment, entrusted to me by the movement, including three machine pistols, four or five revolvers, explosives, grenades, detonators..."

"Incidentally I took part in bomb attacks on Mohammedans during January or February 1955."

On the preparation and execution of the various attacks in this period, Damiani testified:

"The actions were decided upon in discussions in the villa of a certain Charles Luigi, Boulevard des Mutilés in Casablanca, attended generally by Causse, Luigi, André Congos, Colonel Raymond, a certain (police officer) Antoine Mellerio, and, occasionally, myself. Orders reached us from Causse, usually transmitted by Congos."

In full detail Damiani described his part in five murder attempts. Some of the victims were brown, some white; sometimes machine pistols were used, sometimes revolvers. Three victims survived, two died. All five were carried out by Damiani with his cohorts Congos and Mellerio in one car.

In July of the same year Damiani took part in two attacks which give luster to the dull daily existence of an assassin and which secure Damiani a place in modern assassination-history: attacks on industrialist Lemaigre-Dubreuil and his friend, former Minister President Mendès-France.

Lemaigre-Dubreuil was a millionaire-adventurer. Wealthy by inheritance -- principal stock-holder of the wholesale concern Printemps and married to the heiress of the oil-mill king Lesieur -- he was mentioned repeatedly in army reports in the first World War for heroism, he spent his time until World War II with expeditions in Africa and with the increase of his riches, and experienced the French collapse in 1940 as orderly to General Weygand.

After the French capitulation, equally disappointing to both Weygand and de Gaulle, Lemaigre-Dubreuil engineered in cooperation with the US trouble-shooter Robert Murphy the flight of General Giraud from the stronghold Konigstein in Taunus to Algiers.

Although, despite the suspicion of treason, he was assured by judicial process that he had "contributed to the glory of the Fatherland," he turned his back on this Fatherland and settled after the war in Morocco.

Lemaigre-Dubreuil became a pioneer of a liberal policy of conciliation in the North African colonies.

In April 1955 the now 61 year old millionaire acquired the majority of stock in the large Moroccan newspaper "Maroc-Presse." He was a close friend of the ex-Minister President Mendès-France who also favored a policy of understanding in the colonies.

On 10 June 1955 Lemaigre-Dubreuil talked in Paris with Minister President Faure. A day later he returned to Casablanca. Waiting for him there was the experienced terrorist-trio composed of Congos, Melero, and Damiani.

According to the evidence given by Damiani, the trio had learned of Lemaigre-Dubreuil's return through a telegram sent to Causse from France.

Late on the evening of 11 June 1955 the trio parked their Citroen 15 CV before the modern apartment house "Liberté" in Casablanca, in which the millionaire maintained an apartment, and shut off their lights.

They waited over an hour, watching constantly the lighted entrance and the lighted windows on the second floor.

Finally at 11:30 P.M. the light went out. A few minutes later two men emerged from the door and bid each other goodbye. Lemaigre-Dubreuil went to his car not far from the house entrance.

At this instant the headlights of the Citroen flashed on the other side of the street. The car moved directly toward Lemaigre-Dubreuil, a machine pistol volley coming out of a side window. Congos was not a bad shot: his victim sank to the ground hit by more than 20 bullets.

The news of this murder alarmed France, troubled Paris. This time it had not been a dark-skinned Moslem who bit the dirt but a Frenchman on intimate terms with minister-presidents of the Fourth Republic and with connections reaching as far as the White House in Washington.

The chief of French counter-intelligence ("Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire"), Roger Wybot, 49, relieved of his post only a year ago by de Gaulle after the General's son-in-law accidentally discovered one of Wybot's concealed microphones in the private residence of the President, growled then in his office near the Seine: "Without moving from my desk I could name the murderers and their superior."

Yet nothing happened in this connection. Even when Congos, Mellero, and Damiani were apprehended for other crimes years later by the French police, they were not tried for their murders in Morocco.

Mellero was defended by the same man who greeted Dr. Causse at the Orly Airport after his ejection from Morocco and who also advised Christian Durieux years later when he was sought by the German police: the extremist lawyer, conspirator, and deputy Jean-Baptiste Biaggi.

It is clear from Damiani's testimony how secure the terrorist-trio felt:

"A few hours after this event (the murder of Lemaigre-Dubreuil) we received another telegram with the news that Mendes-France had meanwhile arrived in Casablanca. We were assigned to shoot him, Congos, Mellero, and I.

"We knew that he would go to Lemaigre-Dubreuil's apartment and we drove there in a Chevrolet...

"We waited about an hour in front of the entrance but as Mendes-France emerged we saw that he was surrounded by policemen, and we were unable to act...

"I want to add here that I later learned that Congos was sent to France with the assignment to establish contact with certain political circles and to attempt another assassination of Mendès-France in Paris.

"I learned that he had been there and seen certain persons."

Damiani thus came to a theme which could only be uncomfortable for the investigating judge: the ties of the terrorists in Morocco with Paris.

Damiani: "I am prepared to name the persons who sought out Congos, as Congos told me, for I believe that this is all very important for my defense and I reserve the right to use it."

"It concerns Marshal Juin, police commissar Dides, Biaggi, Tixier-Vignancour, and M. Mattei, director of the Grandes Garages in Paris."

At another point Damiani said: "I participated because of the patriotic exhortations of Dr. Causse who told me that we must march like soldiers for France and that our activity was endorsed by Juin, Tixier-Vignancour, Dides, and Biaggi."

At about the same time as Damiani was testifying, the Tunisian paper "Action" reported, on 5 May 1958, on Juin's alleged involvement in the Lemaigre-Dubreuil affair:

"On the day of his death Lemaigre-Dubreuil had with him a briefcase which he never let out of his hands, from which at least one document disappeared. This concerns a letter written by the starred Képi (Juin) to Marcel Déat (French fascist leader) during the German occupation (of France) in which he said, 'I should be proud and happy to serve under the command of General Rommel.' Admiral Darlan, then working closely with the Germans, is said to have had the letter in his hands once and to have remarked, 'That much one is not asking of him...'"

This information about the Vichy past and the terror involvement of the last living marshal of France and first commander of NATO forces in Central Europe is substantiated by the fact that a trusted colleague of Juin's during the second World War was condemned to death after victory for collaboration; and the Marshal himself was later involved in the first, successful rising in Algeria as well as in the second, unsuccessful one.

It is also a fact that investigations of the Moroccan attacks revealed for the first time connections between the assassinations in North Africa and later terrorism in Europe. Of the members of the

conspiratorial group which, according to Damiani, planned the murders in Casablanca, Colonel Raymond is the present leader of the right-extremists in Lyon.

Damiani's cohort Avival is now living in Montreux under the name Havilland in a sort of home maintained by the "Red Hand" for its personnel. This home is not a stone's throw away from the villa in which Mrs. Ferhat Abbas, wife of the head of the Algerian FLN rebels, is living. The occupants of this home have at various times included: the terrorist Avival of Morocco; the longtime head of the French terrorists in Algeria, Kovacs; the leader of the last Algerian rising, cafe-owner Ortiz; and the assassin sought by Moroccan and German police, "Killer" Jean Viari.

Like the involvements of the lawyer Biaggi in Moroccan and Algerian events and in "Red Hand" terrorism, like the life and death of Georg Puchert who was delivering weapons to Moroccan rebels already in 1954 and was murdered in Frankfurt in 1959 while supplying the Algerian revolution, the activity of Viari is also evidence for the personal connections between assassinations in North Africa and in Germany.

The German criminal police are looking for Viari today in connection with the murder of Puchert. The French security forces in Morocco regarded Viari highly for his knowledge of native methods and the dynamic of his actions. In Casablanca he was known in the Cabaret "Negresco" for his weaknesses: alcohol and loose women.

Across from Viari's favorite hangout, the "Negresci," was the "Café Rex" the cellar of which served the French terrorists, mostly young men of Corsican origin, as a meeting place. There and in his apartment in Casablanca, Rue Franchet-D'Esperay, Viari conferred many times with Congos, Mellerio, and Damiani.

Another evidence of relationship between events in Morocco and in Germany is the identical way in which arms dealer Puchert's, hunting weapon supplier Schluter's, and deputy prosecutor in Morocco Auguste Thuveny's automobiles were blown up. Similarly, a native pharmacist and rebel in Morocco was eliminated by the terrorists through the sending of an explosive package through the mail, just as Henriette Tremead, wife of the Strassburg Prefect, was killed years later in Europe. The same method cost the Algerian arms dealer Noassri both of his hands.

While it is clear that some of the origins of the "Red Hand" actions in Germany lead back to Morocco in the period between the Sultan's deportation in 1953 and the granting of independence in 1956, only the outbreak of war in Algeria in 1954 led to the spreading of France's colonial struggles to West Europe.

The Algerian drama began on 1 November 1954 with the attacks by Algerian partisans on European settlers in Algiers and Constantine. The number of victims -- 28 whites -- on that night was small, but it marked the beginning of the bloodiest and most dangerous chapter in France's colonial history. It has so far cost 500,000 human lives; the Fourth Republic collapsed; and the Gaullist Fifth Republic is poisoned to the core.

The fight for the last French bastion in North Africa was carried out on both sides with greater bitterness, craftiness, and brutality than any previous battle. As the loss of the neighboring Tunisian and Moroccan protectorates grew more inevitable (they received their independence in 1956), the struggle in Algeria became that much more stubborn.

The French counter-terror grew to be, as it still is today, a power dangerous to the state. From then on the terrorists fought every French advocate of conciliation with the same hatred that they turned on any FLN leader who fell into their hands -- supported therein by generals and ministers in Paris and Algiers.

On the evening of 16 January 1957 one of the boldest outrages in history occurred in Algiers, showing the world at that time how critical the French position in Algeria was.

It was about seven o'clock as the French commander, General Raoul Salan, went through his mail in his headquarters in the Old City. But instead of receiving his colleagues as usual to discuss the current situation, he then went to the nearby General Government in response to the urgent request of Robert Lacoste, Minister for Algeria.

The General, whom the right-extremists regarded as co-responsible for the loss of Indochina and from whom they expected similar policies in Algeria, sat across from the Minister as a double-detonation splintered the windows. "What have they done now?" asked Lacoste indignantly. General Salan, having run to the window, exclaimed, "But that's my house. I am going over."

Salan's office resembled a battlefield. Two charges coming through window and wall had devastated it. Salan's adjutant, Rodier, lay on the floor dead. One floor higher Salan's little daughter, who had been doing her schoolwork, was badly injured by flying glass; she was to require three months for recovery.

The ensuing action has been described by the two French military experts, Serge and Merry Bromberger, in their book, "The 13 Conspiracies of 13 May":

"The General looked at the deep hole in the wall; it pointed at the terrace of a house across the square. Followed by Commissar Poewin and Colonel Massignac, General Salan crossed the square and climbed to the terrace. There he found two amateurishly improvised 'Bazookas' with a detonating cord dangling into the courtyard below.

"The cord was carried from store to store until the merchant who had sold it was found. The merchant said that it was not bought by a Moslem but by a European.

"This time Lacoste was frightened. Even though the terrorists had been of assistance to him in putting down the rebels, he did not want to leave them in control of Algeria any longer. He called the 'Sûreté' in Paris.

The 'Sûreté' quickly found the organizer of the murder attempt. He was not an Algerian rebel, but rather their enemy, the head of French counter-terror in Algeria, René Kovacs.

Born the son of Hungarian parents in Algeria in 1924, Kovacs was a doctor, French swimming champion, and adventurer married to a Spanish woman who owned a hotel in Mallorca. He led an expensive life in Algiers, drove an American car, and lived in a luxurious villa in the suburb Bouzareah.

His connections reached as far as the generals Faure and Cogy who preceded Massu as unsuccessful planners of the downfall of the Fourth Republic and to such politicians as Michel Debré, now de Gaulle's Premier, Jacques Soustelle, de Gaulle's dismissed Minister of Information, and Pascal Arrighi, a Corsican deputy and conspirator à la Blaggi.

His unrestrained violence against all opponents of French Algeria frightened even his close friends.

He was leader of terrorists who blew up a house in the native quarter of Algiers in March 1956 killing 28 Moslems.

He managed through his secret organization ORAF on New Year's Eve 1957 the planting of explosives in the confessionals of the cathedral in Algiers in order to convince the liberal bishop that the rebels were enemies of the church -- for he made it look like a rebel act.

He was present when terrorists and paratroopers tortured tobacco dealer Mohamed Chaoud, suspected of being a courier for the rebels, and accidentally held his head in a water pail so long that he died.

The villa "Les Sources" was headquarters for the terrorists. On the first floor was a staff office and "courtroom" in which captured enemies were sentenced to death. In the cellar were loudspeakers, supplies, and leaflets proclaiming "We have taken Algeria to free France." Below this was the most important area, a room with cold-water baths, electrically charged chains, and instruments of torture which Dr. Kovacs could use masterfully.

For nearly three years the army and police tolerated him in Algiers, aided him, and even invited him to take part in actions against the rebels. But with the move against Salan he went too far. He was arrested and brought to trial. His attorneys were Tixier-Vignancour, named by Damiani as a helper of the terrorists in Morocco and once an official of the Vichy regime under Petain, and -- naturally -- the experienced defender of terrorists, Jean-Baptiste Biaggi.

As the trial began in summer 1958 the public was soon excluded and soon thereafter the principal defendant, Kovacs, was released from confinement for reasons of health. The Paris military court met again on 6 October 1958 and sentenced Kovacs to die -- in absentia. The "sick" Kovacs was already over the Pyrenees to his wife's hotel in Mallorca, where the leader of the last unsuccessful plot in Algiers, cafe-owner Ortiz, found refuge for a few days a year later.

The measures which Kovacs took to conceal himself early in the trial -- he appeared on a stretcher and with head and hands bandaged -- proved unnecessary. The officials had not even taken his passport. For between his arrest and the trial occurred the Algerian coup for which Salan's death was to have been the signal. On 13 May 1958 the army took power in Algiers, doomed the Fourth Republic, and raised de Gaulle to power.

Next week: The Five Fingers of the "Red Hand" -- A Tape-Recording From Versailles -- Who Is the Chief?

FIGURE APPENDIX

[Captions -- by page of original]:

- p. 34 -- "Little Napoleon" Durieux: Terrorist or joker?
- p. 36 -- Terrorist attorney Biaggi. First blown up ...
Chief Prosecutor Wold ... then let the air out again
- p. 38 -- Kuarez, Housseaux, Berthommier: Explosives in a cognac package

- p. 41 -- Police official Dickopf. Murder in a Mercedes
- p. 44 -- Letter recipient Attar. "You old savage ...
... risk the death penalty": Threatening letter of the
Red Hand
- p. 46 -- MNA Organizer Merbah. Ejected
MNA Chief Messali. Captured
- p. 48 -- Policemen, victim Nesbah: After the lemonade ...
... Cheek-kissing and pistol shots: Parking lot, Hotel
"Ninety"
- p. 39 -- Terrorist leader Kovacs (on the stretcher): Blazing wood in
the Confessional
- p. 40 -- Hached
Map -- self-explanatory
- p. 42 -- Scene of the crime apartment house "Liberte." Just before
midnight. Murdered millionaire Lemaigre-Dubreuil ... light
went out
- p. 45 -- Marshal Juin: a telegram from Paris ...
... ordered the murder-commando: Ex-Minister President
Mendès-France
- p. 46 -- Thuveny
Commander Salan. Death before the desk
- p. 48 -- Swimming champion Kovacs. The opponent drowned in a water
pail

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